

## **The Straits Times, HOME, Pg 9 10 April 2007, Tuesday**

### **Civil service pay rise timely: Experts**

By: LEE SU SHYAN & AARON LOW

HIRING consultants have said that the pay increases for the public sector are timely and will stave off resignations.

They were speaking in response to the civil service salary changes unveiled yesterday by Mr Teo Chee Hean, the minister-in-charge of the civil service.

With Singapore's civil service needing to recruit and retain good people, fresh graduates with a good honours degree can look forward to a pay rise of as much as 10 per cent.

Other officers in the prison or police force, whose pay packets are lagging behind the benchmarks by some 26 per cent, will get a performance-linked payment and adjustments to their monthly salaries to narrow the gap.

"It does seem that the public sector pay has lagged behind the private sector pay for some years. This increase will go some way towards retaining talent," said Mr Mark Ellwood, managing director of recruitment firm Robert Walters Singapore.

Human resource expert Paul Heng, who heads NeXT Career Consulting Group Asia, said: "It's always good to have a regular review of employees' salaries, in order to better retain the people that the company requires."

GMP Group's chief executive officer Annie Yap noted that working in the civil service has its pluses, including good work-life balance practices.

"All things considered, I think civil service still is quite attractive to people who want a stable job that pays well," she said.

The pay rises take place against a backdrop of a booming economy, with many industries facing labour shortages, such as in banking and finance, IT and engineering.

Already, private sector companies are offering high salaries and attractive perks to woo the best people, said Mr David Wee, director of Adecco Human Capital Solutions.

And in such situations, organisations need to ensure that high-calibre performers are recruited and remain motivated on the job.

But it is not just salaries; other factors will also come into play, added Mr Wee.

“Talent sourcing and retention strategies should go beyond the dollars and cents. Offering higher salaries is just one of the many ways for the Government to attract and retain top performers,” he said.

Civil servant A. Yip, a management executive, agreed, saying it is more than just salary that keeps her in the job.

“While money is important to me, work that is meaningful is also a big factor. I feel my work adds to society, so even if my salary lags behind, I don’t mind staying on,” said the 25-year-old.